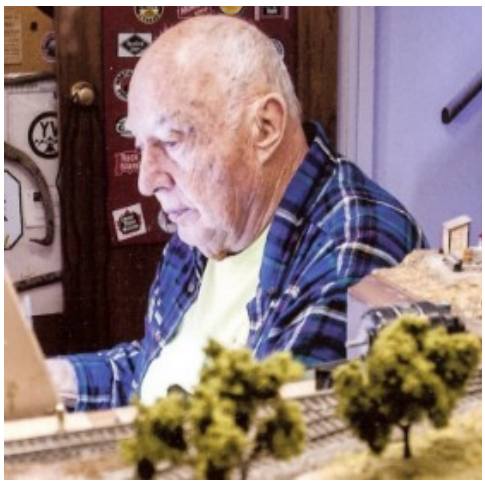
MMR_0281 Bob Rothe Rocky Mountain Region



Bob has a fabulous model railroad! He also has a fabulous Webpage for his railroad:

Yampa Valley Railroad (yampavalleyrailroad.wordpress.com)

Please look at his Website, because words here could not possibly describe his high level of modelng skills.

Bob Rothe is a Master Model Railroader (MMR) who has achieved the highest level of recognition in the model railroading community. The Master Model Railroader (MMR) title is awarded by the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) to individuals who demonstrate exceptional skill, knowledge, and dedication to the hobby.

PLEASE DO READ THE FOLLOWING PAGE which contains an article that Bob wrote to his father. "Thank you for introducing me to model railroading."

Bob wrote article for his dad.

Guest essay

THANKS, DAD!

JUNE 18 is Father's Day. While many of us were introduced to this delightful hobby in other ways, I suspect a large number — especially those whose interest dates back to their youth — received their first contact with model railroading through their fathers. This was my situation, and I presume to represent a large segment of the hobby in expressing a collective "thank you" to the many fathers who planted those seeds of interest so long ago. The form of this expression is a brief narrative describing my initial encounter with the hobby.

Each fall, Dad would ask my sister and me for suggestions from which he and Mother could select Christmas gifts. Always happy to comply, my list perennially cataloged all the "latest" toys — of course consistent with the maturing growth of a young lad. Curiously, shirts, pants, and pajamas never found their way onto such a list. In 1947, Dad amended his annual request with a remark about a fellow schoolteacher (an adult!) who was engaged in a hobby called "Model Railroading." Dad asked me (a 12-year-old!) if I thought such a hobby might prove interesting. My immediate (unspoken) response was negative; but that would, I felt, necessitate an explanation as to *why not* build model trains when ships and airplanes seemed to be acceptable. So, a noncommital grunt answering the latter question accompanied an enthusiastic promise to compose the requested list.

Days later, Dad scanned the list just handed him: baseball mitt, Monopoly game, pocket knife . . . . The exact composition of the list is neither important nor recalled, but what was significant was the total absence of any reference to the newly suggested hobby. Dad inquired about the omission, wondering if I had forgotten or simply was not interested. Again, I felt threatened if I should tender a negative reply; so the simpler expedient prevailed to issue a little white lie: "Sure, Dad, I just forgot. Here, let me add model trains to the list." With that falsehood, the hobby was once again forgotten — forever, as much as I cared.

Christmas 1947. The floor was littered with paper, boxes, and ribbons as little piles of treasure began to grow. Happy, excited chatter, punctuated by ohs and ahs for each newly opened gift, filled the air. My older sister carried on so about a *blouse*. Now, the baseball mitt was different. *There* was something to crow about!

One more package remained for me under the tree. Shredding its wrapping, I read aloud the label: "Gor-don Var-ney. Box Car Kit. NYC Pacemaker." I remember wondering what NYC meant. Suddenly, the long-forgotten white lie was recalled and I had to strain a little to find the words: "Gee, thanks. That's really neat." The yellow, blue, and red box remained unopened under the tree the rest of that day and for several more to come. Monopoly and "catch" occupied most of my holidays.

Eventually, the moment arrived. No one was around to play games; Mom and Dad had company; my sister was out for the evening. There was nothing to do but listen to my favorite Sunday night radio programs and fiddle with the contents of that box under the tree.

As the familiar words emerged from the little radio: "Hello again; this is Jack Benny," the blocks and sticks of wood, unidentified pieces of metal, and embossed paper cardstock were spread onto my desk. I began to tinker. Gradually, the blocks of wood became a rectangular framework with the aid of model airplane glue. To my surprise, crimped bands of brass gave the roof an appealing texture. Underframe, truck bolsters, and brake equipment did the same for the underside of the floor. I became intrigued with the thought of what the finished product might be. Embossed card, printed in red and gray and lettered in white, magically yielded convincing car sides when cut along a line and glued to the subbody. My pulse quickened as the pieces took shape and character. The newfound treasure was shown to both parents and guests for their inspection and approval with increasing frequency.

The finished product sat before me — a New York Central boxcar. My proud eyes were unable to see the drop of paint spilled on the side, the huge gobs of glue holding incorrectly formed ladders against the body, nor the cardstock ends cut just a scale foot too short to cover the roofstock. Never mind these flaws. It was mine. I built it, and it was beautiful.

All that took place more than 30 years ago. The car hides in its familiar box in a cabinet. Few people ever see it; but then, the car isn't very good by anybody's standards. I can see that now. Still, once in a while when I am alone, I pause from my current project to view again that monstrosity of a disaster. When I do, the never present observer would catch me in a quiet moment of misty reflection; and he might even hear a softly whispered: "Thanks, Dad!" — *Robert E. Rothe.*

June 1978 – Thank you for introducing me to Model Railroading